

Office of Regulatory Assistance Policy

Contact: (360) 902-0481

1.1 Purpose

This policy recognizes that it may be necessary to include links on the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site to Web sites outside the Office of Regulatory Assistance's control. The purpose of this policy is to clearly state that the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site is not a public forum for communication and debate. Links to external Web sites from the Office of Regulatory Assistance pages are established and retained at the discretion of the Office of Regulatory Assistance. The policy also provides guidelines on when links to external sources are inappropriate.

The Purpose of the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site is to promote public service to citizens and businesses by:

- Expanding business and citizen access to government services and government information;
- Offering an easy and convenient process to conduct online transactions with State government;
- Accelerating the delivery of quality online government services;
- Improving the level of customer service from State government; and
- Extending online government services to all citizens in Washington State.

1.2 Definitions

"Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site" shall mean the Internet portal operated and maintained by the Office of Regulatory Assistance. The Office of Regulatory Assistance is not a forum for public communication and debate. The criteria outlined in this Policy have been established to ensure that the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site remains a non-public forum.

"Office of Regulatory Assistance Internet Properties", "Office of Regulatory Assistance Web pages" and "Web pages operated by the Office of Regulatory Assistance" shall mean Web pages whose content is under the direction and control of the Office of Regulatory Assistance, including the Office of Regulatory Assistance Public Web site, and other Office of Regulatory Assistance Web sites. (These terms do not include intranet sites controlled or operated by the Office of Regulatory Assistance.)

"Purpose" shall mean the stated purpose of the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site in this policy.

"External Web site" shall mean all Web Sites other than the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site.

1.3 Applicability

This policy applies to the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site and other Office of Regulatory Assistance Internet properties. Links to the following types of Web pages may be included in the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site:

1. Other Governmental Units & Educational Institutions — Office of Regulatory Assistance may provide links to other federal, state, and local governmental units that provide additional services and information that the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site users may find of interest.
2. Private Organizations — Office of Regulatory Assistance may provide links to private organizations if these organizations offer services that complement the Purpose,

information and services offered by the Office of Regulatory Assistance and if the links meet the Acceptance Criteria stated in this policy.

Office of Regulatory Assistance may provide links to Web sites that are not controlled, maintained, or regulated by the Office of Regulatory Assistance, and as such the Office of Regulatory Assistance is not responsible for the content of those Web sites.

Use of information obtained from External Web sites is voluntary. Any information obtained from an External Web site is not guaranteed by the Office of Regulatory Assistance and the user should review the accuracy of any information before relying upon it. Reference to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, or otherwise does not represent endorsement or recommendation by the Office of Regulatory Assistance.

1.4 Guidelines for Establishing a Link from the Agency's Web site to an External Web site

Using the following Acceptance Criteria, the Office of Regulatory Assistance will review every link and decide whether it is appropriate and relevant:

1. The External Web site corresponds with the Purpose of the Office of Regulatory Assistance.
2. The External Web site is appropriate with respect to the Purpose of the Office of Regulatory Assistance. An inappropriate Web site may include, but is not limited to:
 - A commercial Web site which charges a fee for products or services online;
 - A Web site that exhibits hate, bias, discrimination, pornography, libelous or otherwise defamatory content;
 - A Web site that advocates or promotes the use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs;
 - A Web site that lobbies, advocates, or advances the policies and priorities of a particular industry, organization or enterprise. This includes sites of non-profit organizations;
 - A Web site that belongs to or supports a political affiliation;
 - A Web site that furthers the agenda of a political organization or candidate running for office;
 - A Web site that promotes or makes available adult or sexually oriented entertainment or materials;
 - A Web site that promotes, opposes, or makes available weapons or gambling.

Additionally, the Office of Regulatory Assistance reserves the right to deny links if it determines that a Web site contains misleading or unsubstantiated claims, conflicts with the Purpose of the Office of Regulatory Assistance or does not meet one or more of the criteria set forth in this policy.

1.5 Guidelines for Establishing a Link To the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site From an External Web site

Advance permission to link to the Office of Regulatory Assistance website is not necessary; however, Web site users should be aware that the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site sub pages, including the pages of other state agencies and local governments, may change at any time without notice. Anyone linking to the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site should continuously verify links to sub pages.

Anyone linking to the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site shall not display the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web pages within frames, present the Office of Regulatory Assistance content as its own, or otherwise misrepresent the Office of Regulatory Assistance content, and they should not misinform users about the origin or ownership of the Office of Regulatory

Assistance content. Certain information on the Office of Regulatory Assistance may be trademarked, service-marked, or otherwise protected as intellectual property. Protected intellectual property must be used in accordance with state and federal laws and must reflect the proper ownership of the intellectual property.

1.6 Link Oversight and Monitoring

Office of Regulatory Assistance shall establish procedures to monitor the implementation and continuing oversight of this policy.

These procedures shall include:

1. A process to review all new requests for links from a Office of Regulatory Assistance Web page to another Web page to ensure compliance with this policy prior to granting the request; and
2. A quarterly review of not less than seven (7) percent or a quantity of thirty-five (35) of the then current external content links for each Office of Regulatory Assistance Internet Property, whichever is less, to ensure that such links still comply with this policy.

1.7 Removal of Content

Office of Regulatory Assistance reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to remove links if it determines that an External Web site contains misleading or unsubstantiated claims, conflicts with the Purpose of the Office of Regulatory Assistance, or does not meet one or more of the criteria set forth herein.

Links from the Office of Regulatory Assistance Web site will be reviewed regularly and may be removed for any of the following reasons:

- The link no longer points to the original information or resource to which it was intended to point;
- The Web site contains inaccurate or misleading information or has changed such that it is no longer in compliance with the acceptance criteria;
- Access to the information has become difficult due to non-standard formatting, lengthy download times, or intrusive advertising;
- The Web site is permanently unreachable or remains unavailable for a lengthy period.

Removal of external links on the above bases will be permitted whether or not the Office of Regulatory Assistance is legally obligated to act upon any information of which it is aware.